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Government of India



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THE ASIATIC SOCIETY

(AN INSTITUTION OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE)

1 PARK STREET • KOLKATA-700016

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ADMINISTRATOR'S PAGE

Dear Members and Readers!

The month of January holds special significance for the Society. In this spirit, The Asiatic Society celebrated its 243rd Foundation Day with great splendour and solemnity on 15 January 2026 at the Mini Auditorium, Science City, marking yet another milestone in its illustrious legacy of scholarship and cultural heritage. The august occasion was graced by the presence of Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Hon'ble Minister of Culture and Tourism, Government of India, whose esteemed presence added immense dignity and prestige to the celebrations.

Professor Santanu Chaudhury, Professor at IIT Delhi and former Director of IIT Jodhpur paid a distinguished visit to the Society on 30 December 2025. The Society also participated with distinction in the 4th Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy Smarak Vigyan Mela o Pradarshani, held at the West Bengal University of Animal and Fishery Sciences (WBUAFS) Campus, Belgachia, Kolkata. The Asiatic Society was honoured with First Prize in the Stall Category at the exhibition.

On this occasion, the Society showcased rare old scripts and manuscript panels highlighting the rich interweaving of mathematics, science, and allied disciplines embedded within them. In addition, the Society organised a quiz competition on the History of Science and The Asiatic Society, which drew enthusiastic participation and appreciation.

Cultural programmes were organised under the banner of 'Vande Virasat' on 5th and 6th January, 2026 to commemorate 150 years of Vande Mataram. Under the inspiring leadership of the Hon'ble Governor of West Bengal and the Patron of The Asiatic Society, Dr. C. V. Ananda Bose, the 'Vande Virasat March' was ceremoniously flagged off from Bankim Bhavan, Chinsurah, by Lt. Col. Anant Sinha, Administrator, The Asiatic Society. The march witnessed the enthusiastic participation of bikers, whose spirited involvement symbolised collective pride in India's rich cultural and national heritage. During the course of the Vande Virasat March, the biker groups arrived at Jorasanko Thakurbari carrying torches, where the Hon'ble Governor, Dr. C. V. Ananda Bose, ceremonially lit the Akhand Jyoti, marking a solemn and evocative moment in the celebrations.

Dr. C. V. Ananda Bose, Hon'ble Governor of West Bengal, was formally felicitated at the Indian Museum by Dr. Pritam Gurey, Librarian, on behalf of The Asiatic Society. The Hon'ble Governor paid a floral tribute to the portrait of Rishi Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay and thereafter ceremonially flagged off the Vande Virasat March, marking the solemn commencement of the commemorative procession.

A group of 9 students of Class XI, accompanied by 2 faculty members from the Department of Humanities, Newtown School visited the Society on 9th January, 2026. Subsequently, a delegation comprising 17 students and 2 faculty members from Berhampur University paid an academic visit to the Society on 12th January 2026.

The 163rd Birth Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated with great splendour and solemnity at The Asiatic Society on the 12th January 2026 reflecting deep reverence for his life, teachings, and enduring legacy.

It is a great privilege to connect with all the Members and well-wishers of the Society through our various social media platforms. We look forward to your active co-operation and participation in the upcoming events of the Society.
I wish you a happy reading.

The Asiatic Society
Kolkata



Anant Sinha
Lieutenant Colonel
Administrator, The Asiatic Society



Ministry of Culture
Government of India



**AN ORDINARY MONTHLY GENERAL MEETING OF
THE ASIATIC SOCIETY WILL BE HELD ON
MONDAY, 2ND FEBRUARY 2026 AT 5 P. M. AT THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY, 1 PARK STREET, KOLKATA - 700016
IN HYBRID MODE**

**MEMBERS ARE REQUESTED TO KINDLY ATTEND THE
MEETING**

AGENDA

1. Confirmation of the Minutes of the last Ordinary Monthly General Meeting held on 5th January 2026.
2. Exhibition of presents made to the Society in January 2026.
3. Notice of Intended Motion, if any, under Regulation 49(d).
4. Matters of current business and routine matters for disposal under Regulation 49(f).
5. The following papers will be read:
 - a) "Nanoscience and Nanotechnology for Human Life with Special Reference to Smart Applications of Organic Nanomaterials"
by Professor Dilip K. Maiti.
 - b) "The Russian Discoveries of India"
by Dr. Eugenia Vanina.

1 Park Street, Kolkata-700016

Dated : 20.01.2026

Anant Sinha
Lieutenant Colonel
Administrator, The Asiatic Society

Nanoscience and Nanotechnology for Human Life with Special Reference to Smart Applications of Organic Nanomaterials

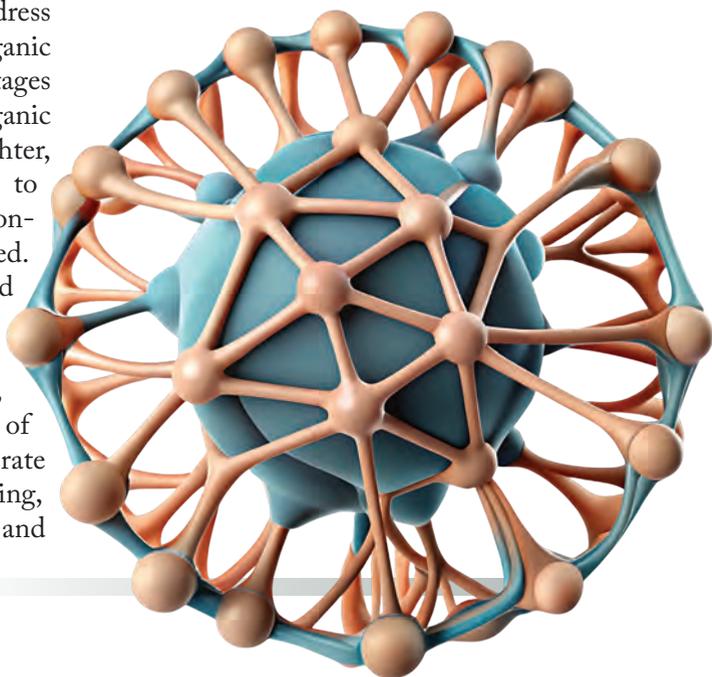
Dilip K. Maiti

Vice-Chancellor, Biswa Bangla Biswabidyalay & Professor, Department of Chemistry, University of Calcutta

Abstract

The area of nanoscience and nanotechnology has grown tremendously over the past two decades and is revolutionizing various aspects of human life, offering smart solutions in medicine, healthcare, electronics, energy, water purification, pollution control, sensing, and many other essential parameters of life through the manipulation of matter at the nanoscale. These advancements improve the potential to transform healthcare, energy efficiency, enhance manufacturing processes, and address environmental challenges. Organic nanomaterials have several advantages over their inorganic counterparts. Organic nanomaterial products are lighter, more flexible, biodegradable, easier to fabricate devices, less expensive, non-magnetic, and can be easily purified. Semiconducting, electronic, and optoelectronic properties can easily be modified by changing size, shape, chemical structure, morphology, and installation of a wide range of functional groups, which in turn generate innovative semiconducting, conducting, photoluminescence, storage, display, and

sensing performances to achieve highly efficient devices. Consequently, organic nanomaterials open up the door to many exciting and advanced new applications that would be impossible using inorganic materials. Thus, design and synthesis of new organic compounds, their fabricated unidirectional materials, and development of new electronic properties are desirable for achieving organic electronics-based high-tech devices of ultimate sensitivity and day-to-day usable innovative



components. Installation of suitable non-covalent interactions like ionic, π - π stacking, hydrogen bonding, halogen bonding, dipole, induced-dipole, hydrophobic, etc. interactions make those molecule to nanomaterials.

We have developed organic nanofibrils as a sensing device for lethal gaseous phosgene, detecting health pollutant cyanide in water, and many others. We have designed and fabricated luminescent organic nanomaterials for trapping dimethylsulfoxide inside the layers of the material to develop innovative inkless writing and self-erasing applications. There will be no use of cellulose paper and ink. The plastic page with the surface having micrograms of the nanomaterials can be reused on heating ($\sim 60^{\circ}\text{C}$) and subsequent exposure to the solvent. A battery will be used in the pen to make it hot for writing instead of ink.

A composition-dependent phenazene-stearic acid-based ultralong nanofiber material was designed, synthesized and fabricated for crossbar devices to achieve organic resistive random access memory (ORRAM) and write-once-read-many-times (WORM) memory devices for non-editable database, archival memory, electronic voting, and radio frequency identification (RFID) applications. A highly stable, Write-Once-Read-Many (WORM) resistive memory device using Amino Acid-Modified Graphene Oxide (AAM-GO) nanofibers embedded in PMMA (poly(methyl methacrylate)) for long-term archival storage. The AAM-GO's wrinkled fiber structure (1D) within the polymer matrix provides excellent data retention, endurance, and a high ON-OFF ratio, making it a promising candidate for

lasting, non-volatile memory applications needing long-term stability.

A PDI-based organic nanomaterial was synthesized for an inverted solar cell, which is an environmentally non-sensitive material towards common solar cell-destructive moisture and oxygen. A sustainable, edible food coating using chitosan modified with acetylated gallic acid nanoparticles (CAG-NPs), enhanced by Pulsed Light (PL) treatment, to significantly extend the shelf life of fresh produce by boosting antimicrobial, antioxidant, and UV-blocking properties, offering a natural alternative to synthetic preservatives. The nano-film-forming nanoparticles have the ability to reduce spoilage, maintain nutritional quality, and lower food waste, marking a promising step towards greener fruit and vegetable preservation.

Metal-organic frameworks (MOFs) have garnered considerable attention as supercapacitor electrode materials due to their large specific surface area and adjustable pore structure, but they are practically limited by poor conductivity. To address this limitation, the MOF, UiO-66-NH_2 , is modified with a conducting polymer, polyaniline (PANI), through in-situ polymerization. In the composite, the MOF unit enriches the PANI polymers with a large number of electroactive centres, facilitating the electron transfer process. Two devices connected in series were used to demonstrate the practical application using yellow LEDs, paving the way toward the futuristic production of energy storage electronics. Novel applications of more innovative organic materials will be discussed.

The Russian Discoveries of India

Eugenia Vanina

Chief Researcher, Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences

Abstract

Separated from each other by the huge Eurasian landmass, Russia and India as if had been moving towards each other throughout the centuries. Traders and travellers, diplomats and runaway slaves, scholars and artists from Russia laboured to open up India for their compatriots. While the governments strove for tradeways and geopolitical gains, while merchants strove for profits, the knowledge-greedy minds wanted to know about the faraway land, initially imagined as the realm of wisdom and fabulous riches and later on as a victim of cruel invaders unable to perceive the intellectual depths and aesthetic perfections of Indian civilization. Russia was perhaps the only one European nation which questioned the right of the British to rule India and was sincerely empathic with India's struggle for freedom. This laid a definite historical foundation for the present day relations between the two countries, based on respect and equality.



Alphabetical Author-wise Index to the List of Articles and Communications Published/Printed in the Journals of the Asiatic Society During 1994-2003

SECTION TWO

We have already in our grip the three parts of Volume One of the Index to the Publications of The Asiatic Society compiled by Sibadas Chaudhuri, which cover all the publications including articles and communications published in the Journals upto the period of bicentenary of the Society. The Asiatic Society has been declared as An Institution of National Importance by an Act of Parliament, in 1984. Since 1984 no Index has been published. An attempt was made to present before the interested readers the Alphabetical Author-wise Index to the Articles and Communications published in the Journals during the first ten years from 1984, that means during 1984-1993. The list was published in the Monthly

Bulletin of the Society for the month of January 2026. Now the second instalment (Section Two) of next ten years during 1994 to 2003 is printed. Two more issues (Sections) would be published in this way where the articles printed in the Journals upto 2023 would be included. Then Index to the Publications of The Asiatic Society, Vol. I, Part IV may be processed with inclusion of other publications along with these lists.

In spite of our best efforts, there may be some escapes. If these are brought to our notice those will be included in the next edition.

Thanks are due to all who assisted me in publication of this Section.

Now, Alphabetical Author-Wise Index to the List of Articles and Communications

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Anandavardhana on Pratibha
JAS, Vol. XLIII, No. 4, 2001, pp. 1-7.

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Christianity in North-East India — Effects on the Process of Nation Building
JAS, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 1, 1996, pp. 4-13.

ATHAR, ALI

Ethnic Composition in the Army of the Delhi Sultans
JAS, Vol. XXXVI, No. 2, 1994, pp. 49-53.

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JAS, Vol. XXXVII, No. 1, 1995, pp. 19-25.

The Role of the Piyadah in the Sultanate of Delhi
JAS, Vol. XXXVII, No. 2, 1995, pp. 24-28.

The Ministry of War in the Delhi Sultanate
JAS, Vol. XXXVII, No. 3, 1995, pp. 1-6.

Military Hierarchy and Designations under the Sultans of Delhi (13th-14th Centuries)
JAS, Vol. XLII, No. 1-2, 2000, pp. 1-6.

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JAS, Vol. XLV, No. 4, 2003, pp. 1-42.

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JAS, Vol. XLIV, No. 1, 2002, pp. 31-42.

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JAS, Vol. XXXVI, No. 3, 1994, pp. 5-10.

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JAS, Vol. XXXVI, No. 3, 1994, pp. 11-13.

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Some Observations on Archaeological Sites in the Western Barind Region — A Preliminary Report
JAS, Vol. XLI, No. 4, 1999, pp. 58-70.

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Asian Folklore and the Asiatic Society
JAS, Vol. XXXVI, No. 3, 1994, pp. 14-16.

BANDYOPADHYAY, UDAYCHANDRA

Atharvanavaisajyavidyayah Paryabeksanam (in Sanskrit)
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Significant Contributions from Asian Countries on Kinetics and Mechanisms
of Inorganic Reactions
JAS, Vol. XLIII, No. 1, 2001, pp. 1-19.

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The Asiatic Society and the Furtherance of Sanskritic Studies
JAS, Vol. XXXVI, No. 3, 1994, pp. 17-21.

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Double-Construction in Modern Bengali Language
JAS, Vol. XXXVII, No. 4, 1995, pp. 35-54.

BANERJEE, ENAKSHI AND PRANABESH SINHA RAY

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JAS, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 3, 1996, pp. 1-29.

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JAS, Vol. XXXVII, No. 4, 1995, pp. 15-34.

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Religion in a Multi-Ethnic Society
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JAS, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 2, 1996, pp. 41-47.

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JAS, Vol. XLII, No. 1-2, 2000, pp. 7-28.

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A Preliminary Observation on the Resting Eggs of Natural Population of Sessile
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JAS, Vol. XXXVII, No. 4, 1995, pp. 55-60.

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JAS, Vol. XLV, No. 3, 2003, pp. 14-35.

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JAS, Vol. XLIII, No. 4, 2001, pp. 8-13.

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JAS, Vol. XLIV, No. 3, 2002, pp. 43-54.

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JAS, Vol. XLI, No. 1, 1999, pp. 74-84.

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JAS, Vol. XLII, No. 1-2, 2000, pp. 29-38.

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Gandhi the Humanist

JAS, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 2, 1996, pp. 48-52.

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Unique Example of Embryo-Transfer in Ancient Jain-Scriptures

JAS, Vol. XLII, No. 3-4, 2000, pp. 205-End.

Myth of Lord Mahavir's Embryo-Transfer in Jain Scriptures

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Gleanings of the Past in the Diaries of Mahendralal and Amritalal Sircar

I. The Pre-IACS Period (1873-1875)

II. The Dawn of IACS (1876-1883)

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III. A Decade of IACS and Amritalal's Diaries (1884-1894)

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JAS, Vol. XL, No. 3-4, 1998, pp. 129-144.

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The First Science Movement in Colonial India (1808-1840) and the Pivotal Contributions of James Prinsep

JAS, Vol. XLIII, No. 3, 2001, pp. 3-25.

Gleanings of the Past and the Science Movement : VII. Additional Diary Notes of Dr Amritalal Sircar (1880-1883 and 1904)

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BOSE, NEMAI SADHAN AND AISHIKA CHAKRABORTY

The Travel Through Darkness : Gleanings from the Unpublished Diaries of
Nirmal Kumar Bose on Gandhi's Pilgrimage to Noakhali
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JAS, Vol. XXXVI, No. 4, 1994, pp. 34-37.

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JAS, Vol. XLIII, No. 1, 2001, pp. 20-47.

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JAS, Vol. XXXVI, No. 3, 1994, pp. 35-39.

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An Outline by Pieter van Dam, an Advocate of the Company
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JAS, Vol. XXXVII, No. 2, 1995, pp. 29-42.

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JAS, Vol. XXXIX, No. 1, 1997, pp. 25-30.

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Could Manu Conceive of Legalising Force of Fraud ?

JAS, Vol. XXXIX, No. 3-4, 1997, pp. 124-130.

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Women Responded Fearlessly

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JAS, Vol. XLIII, No. 2, 2001, pp. 29-39.

CHUNDER, PRATAP CHANDRA

Historical Linguistics and Professor Sukumar Sen
JAS, Vol. XLIV, No. 4, 2002, pp. 49-50.

COSERU, CHRISTIAN

The Continuity between Madhyamaka and Yogacara Schools of Mahayana Buddhism in India
JAS, Vol. XXXVII, No. 2, 1995, pp. 48-83.

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JAS, Vol. XXXIX, No. 1, 1997, pp. 31-52.

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JAS, Vol. XXXVII, No. 1, 1995, pp. 1-10.

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JAS, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 1, 1996, pp. 29-34.

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Lingaraja Temple and the Ganga-Gajapati Kings of Orissa
JAS, Vol. XLIV, No. 3, 2002, pp. 1-12.

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The Asiatic Society in the 4th APC Roy Smarak Vigyan Mela O Pradarshani

The 4th Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy Smarak Vigyan Mela O Pradarshani was held from 1st to 3rd January, 2026 at the West Bengal University of Animal & Fishery Sciences (WBUAFS), 37, K. B. Sarani, Belgachia, Kolkata-37. Every year the Mela witnesses participation from students of various schools, colleges, and universities, along with farmers, entrepreneurs, local citizens, and representatives from government institutions, who present exhibits related to science and technology. This collective participation makes the event a grand occasion, attracting substantial public interest and enthusiasm. The Asiatic Society, a premier institution dedicated to the preservation and dissemination of cultural, literary, and scientific heritage through its rich manuscript collections, is invited to participate in the said Vigyan Mela every year. Since the inception of this science fair, the Society has been participating every year by setting up an exhibition stall and showcasing exhibits related to its enriched collection with the objective of enhancing public outreach and disseminating knowledge among the general public. The theme of the Mela for this year was 'Fostering Scientific Temperament'.

This year, the Society showcased several manuscript panels related to scientific subjects, including Chemistry, Astronomy, Mathematics, Ayurveda, Botany (such as studies on Himalayan plants), and Zoology (including manuscripts on selected Indian birds), written in diverse languages and scripts. The primary objective of the display was to introduce visitors to the rich heritage of scientific knowledge and its cultivation in ancient India. In addition, photocopies of archival documents, including correspondence of eminent Indian scientists associated with the Society, were displayed in the standees.



The students were familiarized with the manuscripts illustrated on the panels.



Visitors observing the displayed panels at the Society's stall

In addition, live demonstrations on preventive conservation methods and the use of chemicals in conservation and preservation were organized at the Society's exhibition stall for the benefit of visitors. The initiative aimed to highlight the distinct treatments required for preserving priceless ancient documents written on various kinds of materials, such as handmade paper, palm leaf, and others, thereby helping to create public awareness about different conservation techniques.



Conservation activities demonstrated in front of the visitors at the exhibition stall

Each staff, members from the Museum section were present at the exhibition stall to guide the visitors and provide necessary explanations. The visitors were greatly fascinated being confronted with the unknown historical resources which was reflected in their enthusiastic comments recorded in the Visitors' Book. A quiz competition was also organized for the visiting students from various schools and colleges, which generated significant interest and encouraged active participation among the students. Token prizes were awarded to each student who answered the questions correctly, further enhancing their enthusiasm and engagement.

The exhibition, live demonstrations, and interactive quiz programme were well-received, particularly by students, and successfully reflected the theme of the Mela which helped the Society to clinch the first prize in the stall category.



Quiz competition was organized in front of the stall of the Society which received huge enthusiasm among the students and the common people as well



Dr. Keka Adhikari Banerjee, Curator of the Society, receiving the First Prize during the prize distribution ceremony

Among the important participants were stalls set up by several government organizations, including the State Forensic Laboratory, Botanical Survey of India, Zoological Survey of India, Survey of India, National Council of Science Museums, ISRO, and ICAR. In addition, various schools, colleges, and non-governmental organizations participated with their exhibits and models. Each day, talk shows, lectures by eminent persons, cultural programmes and quiz competitions were also held at the main auditorium of the Mela.

Overall, the participation of The Asiatic Society, Kolkata in this Science Fair was a meaningful outreach initiative that effectively promoted scientific awareness among diverse sections of the visitors.

4th A.P.C. Roy Smarak Vigyan Mela O Pradarsana (Child on 1st-10th Jan 2026)

Sl. No.	Date of Visit	Name	Address	Remarks
1	01/01/26	M. Jayanti Bhowmik	Kol. 28, Dombivli	Very good scientific presentation
2	01/01/26	Debjani Majumdar	Kol-55, Kalyanpur	Nice demonstration
3	01/01/26	Anu Kanti Sanyal		Good
4	01/01/26	Rajeev Ghosh	Burdwan	Good
5	01/01/26	Rupam Ghosh	Kolkata	Excellent
6	01/01/26	Sahana Ghosh	Kolkata	Very good, attractive
7	01/01/26	Rishu Das	Asansol	Good
8	01/01/26	Niranjana Das	20, Ghosh Bagan, Kalyan	Good presentation
9	01/01/26	Soumitra Das	20, Ghosh Bagan, Kalyan	Excellent
10	01/01/26	Ananda Das	20, Ghosh Bagan, Kalyan	Excellent
11	01/01/26	Aranya Das	20, Ghosh Bagan, Kalyan	Excellent
12	01/01/26	Soumitra Das	20, Ghosh Bagan, Kalyan	Excellent
13	01/01/26	Rishu Das	20, Ghosh Bagan, Kalyan	Excellent
14	01/01/26	Rishu Das	20, Ghosh Bagan, Kalyan	Excellent
15	01/01/26	S. Das	20, Ghosh Bagan, Kalyan	Excellent
16	01/01/26	Ujjayanti Das	20, Ghosh Bagan, Kalyan	Excellent
17	01/01/26	Soumitra Das	20, Ghosh Bagan, Kalyan	Excellent
18	01/01/26	Soumitra Das	20, Ghosh Bagan, Kalyan	Excellent
19	01/01/26	Soumitra Das	20, Ghosh Bagan, Kalyan	Excellent

Few comments from the Visitors' Book



Stall of the Society at the Vigyan Mela

Observance of 243rd Foundation Day of The Asiatic Society



Lieutenant Colonel Anant Sinha, Administrator, placing wreath at the Tomb of Sir William Jones.



Lieutenant Colonel Anant Sinha, Administrator, hoisting flag at the premises of the Society.



Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Hon'ble Minister of Culture & Tourism, Government of India, and Chief Guest of the Foundation Day Celebration, inaugurating the exhibition of Museum and Publication at Science City.



Lieutenant Colonel Anant Sinha, Administrator, delivering the Welcome Address on the occasion of Foundation Day Celebration at Mini Auditorium, Science City.

EVENTS



Signing of MoU between The Asiatic Society and Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur at Foundation Day Celebration.



Signing of MoU between The Asiatic Society and Visva-Bharati at Foundation Day Celebration.



Signing of MoU between The Asiatic Society and CDAC-Kolkata at Foundation Day Celebration.



Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Hon'ble Minister of Culture & Tourism, Government of India, and Chief Guest of the Foundation Day Celebration, unveiling the ANUKRITI.

EVENTS



Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Hon'ble Minister of Culture & Tourism, Government of India, and Chief Guest of the Foundation Day Celebration, unveiling the VIDHVANIKA.



Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Hon'ble Minister of Culture & Tourism, Government of India and Chief Guest of the Foundation Day Celebration, unveiling the new Website of The Asiatic Society.



Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Hon'ble Minister of Culture & Tourism, Government of India, and Chief Guest of the Foundation Day Celebration, releasing the book *A Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Collection of The Asiatic Society, Volume IV : Philosophy Manuscripts*.



Dr. Sarita Boodhoo, Mauritius-based Social Activist, Writer, Journalist and Awardee of Pravasi Bharatiya Samman – 2025, delivering the Foundation Day Oration.

EVENTS



Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Hon'ble Minister of Culture & Tourism, Government of India, and Chief Guest of the Foundation Day Celebration, delivering his address.



Shri Arupratan Bagchi, Administrative Officer of the Society, delivering the Vote of Thanks.



Distinguished Audience at the Foundation Day Celebration.



Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Hon'ble Minister of Culture & Tourism, Government of India, and Chief Guest of the Foundation Day Celebration, addressing the Officials and Research Fellows on Foundation Day at the Society.



কলকাতার ঝাড়ুদার এবং মেথর নারী: শ্রম শহর ও লিঙ্গ

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আলোচ্য বইটির বিষয়বস্তু ভিন্নতর। শ্রেণি, জাত, লিঙ্গ ও পিতৃতন্ত্রের ছেদবিন্দুকে কেন্দ্র করে লেখকের বিষয়-উপস্থাপনা। কলকাতা মহানগরীর পরিষ্কার-পরিচ্ছন্নতা যে সব নারী ঝাড়ুদার এবং মেথর নারীদের অক্লান্ত পরিশ্রমে হয়ে থাকে তাদের কথাই লেখক এখানে তুলে ধরেছেন। লেখক ক্ষেত্র সমীক্ষাকে আলোচনার মূল ভিত্তি করে শুধুমাত্র এদের জীবনচর্যাই নয় বরং শ্রম, শহর ও লিঙ্গ রাজনীতির আন্তঃসম্পর্ককেও আতসকাচের তলায় নিয়ে এসেছেন।

মূলত তিনটি অধ্যায়ে বইটির বিন্যাস- প্রথম অধ্যায়- কলকাতার ঝাড়ুদার এবং মেথর নারী; উৎপত্তি, বুৎপত্তি এবং তত্ত্বকথা; দ্বিতীয় অধ্যায়- অন্ত্যজদের অন্ত্যজ: কলকাতার ঝাড়ুদার এবং মেথর নারীদের আর্থ সামাজিক বাস্তবতা; তৃতীয় অধ্যায়- জনস্বাস্থ্য ও রাষ্ট্রীয় নীতির প্রেক্ষিতে কলকাতার ঝাড়ুদার ও মেথর নারী।

বর্ণ, জাতি ও জাতপাত-ভারতীয় সমাজের বৈশিষ্ট্য। তবে উপরোক্ত বৈশিষ্ট্যগুলি একুশ শতকেও সমানভাবে সজীব। এই ধারাবাহিকতার প্রধান চালিকাশক্তি হল সামাজিক পার্থক্য, অর্থাৎ সমাজের একটি অংশকে আলাদা চোখে দেখার

মানসিকতা। মহিলারা সমাজে নিম্নতর। পুরুষের তুলনায় অনেক নিম্নতর এবং আজও সেই মানসিকতা সমানভাবে চলছে। আর যাদের কথা লেখক এখানে বিশেষভাবে আলোচনা করেছেন নারী ঝাড়ুদার ও নারী মেথর। এই মহিলারা দ্বৈত বৈষম্যের শিকার। লেখকের সমীক্ষায় প্রকাশিত হয়েছে, আমাদের বৃহত্তর গণতান্ত্রিক দেশে স্বাধীনতা লাভের প্রায় আট দশক পরে এই শ্রেণীর নারীরা শুধুমাত্র লিঙ্গ বৈষম্য নয়, অর্থনৈতিক দুর্দশা, শিক্ষার সীমাবদ্ধতা, স্বাস্থ্যের বিপন্নতার শৃঙ্খলে কেমনভাবে আবদ্ধ। লেখকের আলোচনায় প্রকাশিত হয়েছে বহু অপ্রকাশিত তথ্য। ভারতবর্ষের নারী আন্দোলনের সূচনাকাল থেকেই তথাকথিত উচ্চ বর্ণের নারীদের নেতৃত্ব দেবার প্রাধান্য দেখা যায়। যার দরুন সমাজের প্রান্তিক স্তরের নারীদের ভূমিকা তেমনভাবে দেখা যায়নি। তবে গত শতকের শেষের দশক থেকে প্রান্তিক সমাজের নারীদের মূলধারায় উত্তরণের দাবী ক্রমশ সোচ্চার হতে থাকে। মূল ধারায় নারী আন্দোলনের এই আলোড়ন কতটা দাগ কাটে সেটা কিন্তু বড় প্রশ্ন। লেখকের আলোচনায় সবচেয়ে তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ অংশ প্রান্তিকতম অংশে থাকা নারী ঝাড়ুদার ও

মেথরদের দিকে নির্মোহ আলোকপাত। যদিও লেখকের আলোচনায় মহানগরী বাদে পশ্চিমবঙ্গের অন্যান্য শহরগুলির কোন উল্লেখ নেই। ফলে এই প্রান্তিক নারীদের তুলনামূলক অবস্থানটি পরবর্তী পর্যায়ে লেখক নিশ্চয়ই আলোচনায় আনবেন।

নারী ইতিহাসের এক অনালোচিত প্রান্তিকতম শ্রেণির প্রতি নতুন দৃষ্টিভঙ্গিতে আলোকপাত গবেষকের প্রশংসার দাবী রাখে। আজ ইতিহাস গবেষণা চিরাচরিত রাজনীতি, অর্থনীতি, সমাজ, ধর্ম ও সংস্কৃতির সীমা থেকে অন্যভাবে মানুষের দৈনন্দিন জীবন চর্যাকে ইতিহাসের আঙিনায় নিয়ে এসেছে। যেখানে জনস্বাস্থ্য, পোশাক-পরিচ্ছদ, বিজ্ঞান-পরিবেশ, খেলাধুলা ইত্যাদি প্রাধান্য পাচ্ছে। আবার বিভিন্ন শ্রেণি, জাতি, সম্প্রদায়ের জীবনচর্যাও ইতিহাস আলোচনায় স্থান পেয়েছে। এ কথা ঠিক ইতিহাস আলোচনায় বস্তুনিষ্ঠতা, নিরপেক্ষতা, বিজ্ঞানসম্মত ভিত্তিকে গুরুত্ব দেওয়া হলেও নারীবাদী ইতিহাস গবেষণায় বিষয়ীসত্তাকে

বিশেষ গুরুত্ব দেওয়া হয়না। লেখক সে বিষয়ে বিশেষভাবে সতর্ক থেকেছেন।

গবেষক সারণি, মানচিত্র ও চিত্রসূচির মাধ্যমে, ক্ষেত্র সমীক্ষার তথ্যকে সঠিকভাবে প্রয়োগ করে একটি নির্দিষ্ট ভৌগোলিক ক্ষেত্রের অনালোচিত চিত্রটিকে উপস্থাপন করেছেন, যা ধন্যবাদের দাবী রাখে। তবে একটি বিষয়ে লেখকের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করতে বাধ্য হচ্ছি— তার এই গবেষণা সন্দর্ভে নারী ঝাড়ুদার ও নারী মেথরদের প্রাত্যহিক জীবনের কিছু প্রশ্নভিত্তিক সাক্ষাৎকার সংযুক্তি করা হলে, বিষয়টি আরও প্রাণবন্ত হত। লেখক এ বিষয়ে ভবিষ্যতে আরো সতর্ক হবেন এই আশা রাখি। এছাড়া প্রকাশককে ধন্যবাদ একটি সুন্দর বই প্রকাশের জন্য। তুলনায় মূল্যটি গবেষকদের নাগালের বাইরে, সেদিকেও দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করছি।

রঙ্গনকান্তি জানা

আজীবন সদস্য, দি এশিয়াটিক সোসাইটি

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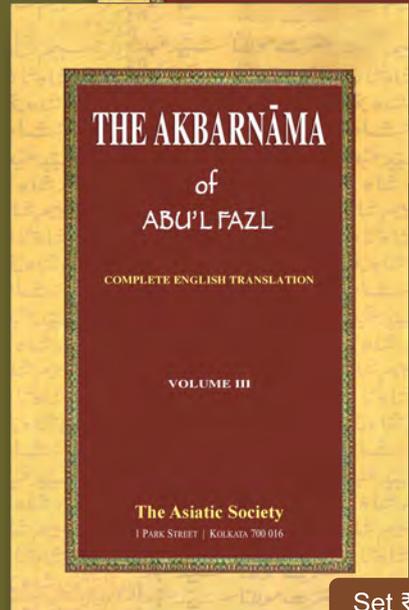
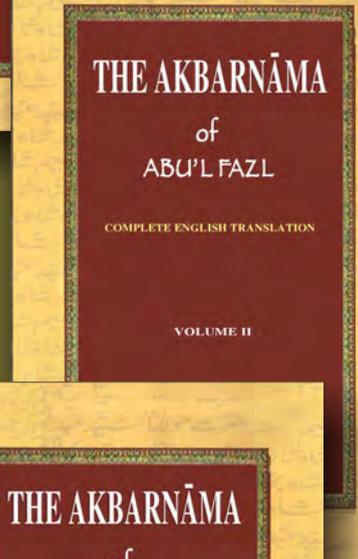
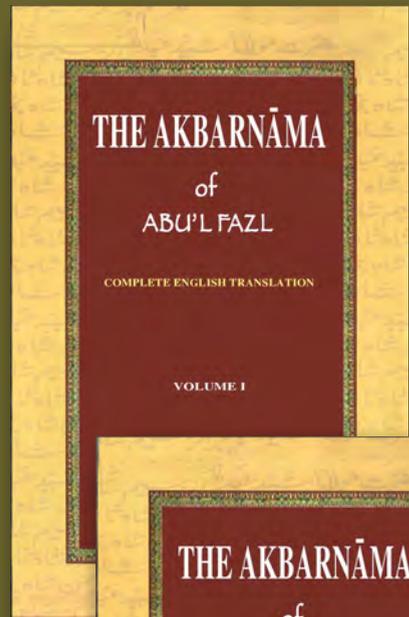
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